A LIFE of GRATITUDE

A Journal to Appreciate It All, Big and Small

LORI ROBERTS

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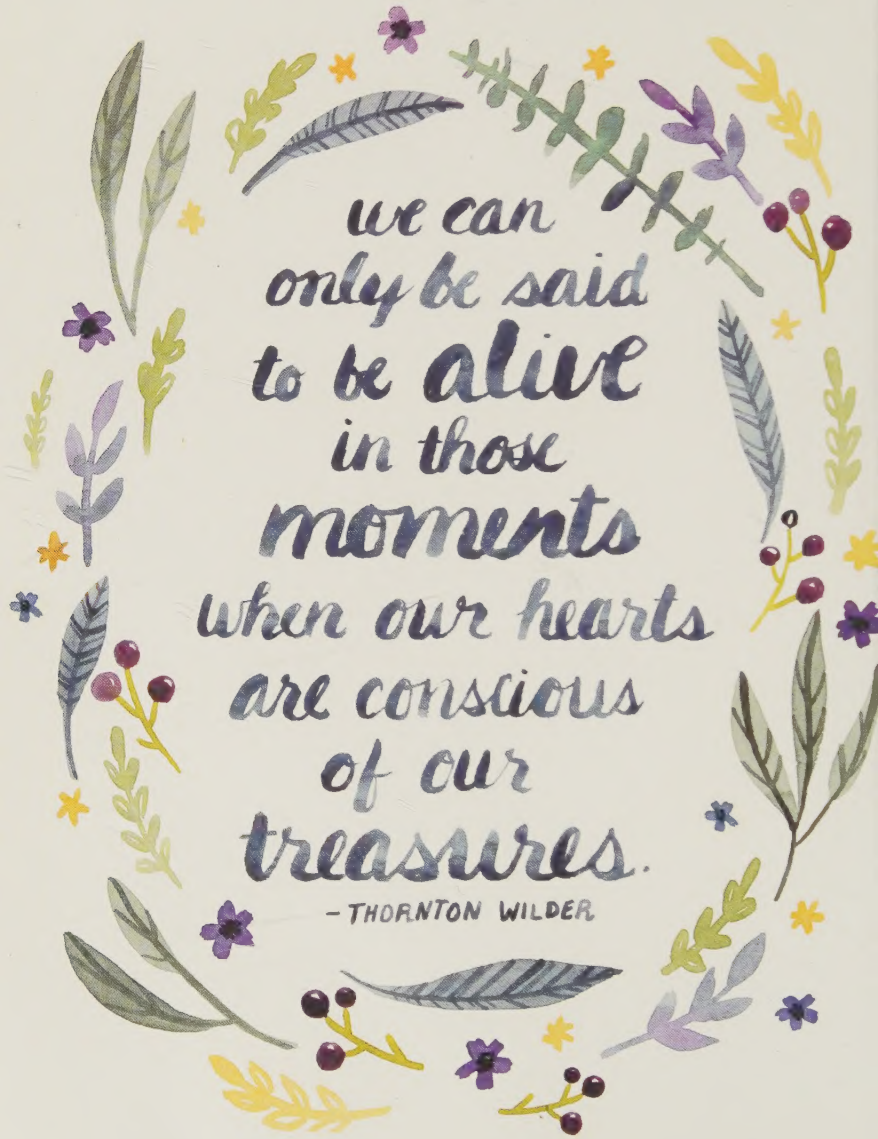
we can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.
-THORNTON WILDER

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It's easy to focus on all the stresses, problems, and nuisances in our lives: daily chores, rush-hour traffic, politics. At some point I noticed how much of my time was consumed with grumbling and negative thoughts, so I started an experiment in mindfulness and gratitude. I focused more on appreciating the little things in my life and seeing more of the positive instead of the negative. It was a subtle shift in my outlook, but over time I began to see the world through a new lens of awareness. That's what this journal is all about—choosing to notice the good stuff more often, to reflect on what is positive, helpful, amazing, and joyous in our lives. You can't always choose joy, just as you can't always ignore bad things in the world or negative feelings. But you can train your brain to think more positively by adopting a readiness to show appreciation for the littlest things.

This journal can be used as often as you want and on no particular schedule. Think about what time of day you might be more likely to write—in the morning before you start your day, or in bed as you reflect on the day's events? And remember that regular journal entries will help train your brain to start seeing gratitude all around you. Make it a habit, and let it be an opportunity to notice the often-overlooked blessings you already have and hopefully brighten your perspective on life.

BEGIN NOW

Start wherever you are right now. Pause and really look around. What do you appreciate and why?

DATE _____

ORDINARY THINGS

Five ordinary things I am thankful for today:

1

2

3

4

5

MAKE A HABIT OF GRATITUDE

[illegible] Are you [illegible] habit [illegible] and what do you hope to gain from it?

It isn't always easy to remember our strengths, the good things about our-

to lose twenty pounds. My kneecaps are ugly. But those negative thoughts do not define us and often aren't even accurate reflections of what others see. We each have personality traits that are really awesome!

Ten wonderful things about me:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10


BE YOURSELF.
EVERYONE
ELSE IS
ALREADY
TAKEN.
-OSCAR WILDE

[illegible]

A SPRING PROJECT: GROW HERBS ON YOUR WINDOWSILL

SENSE OF TOUCH

An electric blanket on a chilly night, a warm embrace, a barefoot walk in the grass—there are so many ways to experience touch. Every once in a while,

Think about a pet you have now or had in the past, or a friend's pet that you have loved playing with. What does this animal mean to you? Why are you thankful to have this pet in your life?

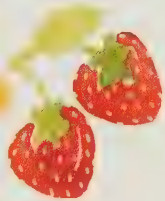
Until one has loved an animal,

a part of one's soul remains unawakened.

—ANATOLE FRANCE

RED

How does the color red make you feel? What are some of your favorite things?



[illegible]

[illegible]

Each time in our lives has a purpose. Think about who you are now compared with who you were in the past, and envision what lies ahead.

Are you a sci-fi movie fanatic, do you play tennis every weekend, or do you prefer curling up with a good book? How do your hobbies improve your quality of life? What brings you joy?

FLIP IT

We can gripe about having to empty the dishwasher, or we can celebrate having a dishwasher and having hot water come directly into the house. Take some things you usually gripe about and flip them to something positive:

IF YOU LOOK THE RIGHT WAY, YOU CAN SEE THAT THE WHOLE WORLD IS A GARDEN.

- FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

PROJECT: GIVE THANK-YOU NOTES

Make a list of people you think are overdue for a thank-you: the mail carrier who makes sure your magazines don't get crumpled, the coworker who [illegible] on your goldfish when you're on vacation.

Five people I plan to give thank-you notes to and why:

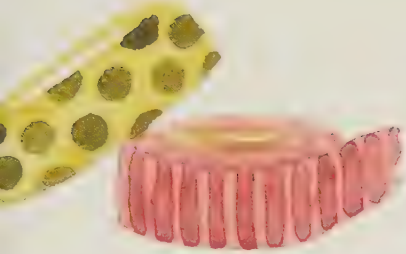
1

2

3

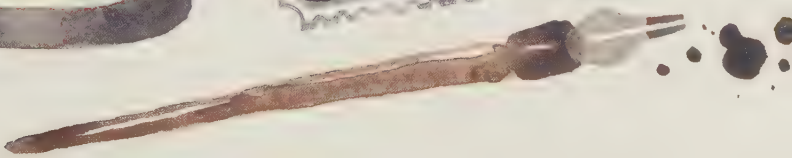
4

5



IF THE ONLY PRAYER YOU EVER SAY IN YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS "THANK YOU," THAT WOULD SUFFICE.

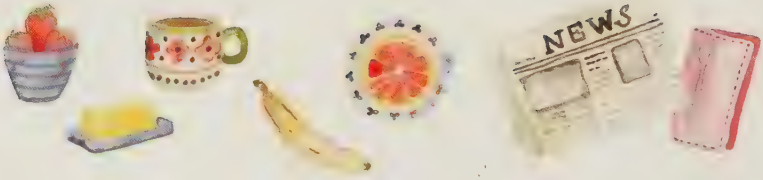
-MEISTER ECKHART



MORNING RITUAL

Do you have a morning routine? Do you like to enjoy a cup of coffee or watch [illegible]
the rest of the day?

[illegible]
mindfulness:



DATE _____

OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY THINGS

Five out-of-the-ordinary things I am thankful for today:

1

2

3

4

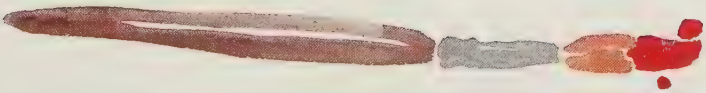
5

WRITE A LETTER

Write a letter to someone from your past—a teacher, coach, friend—who influenced you and helped you become the person you are today. What did they do that stands out to you? How did that make you feel? Why are you thankful that they were a part of your life? What do you want to make sure they know?

blessed
is the
influence
of one
true, loving
human soul
on another.

-GEORGE ELIOT



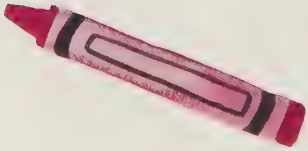
Whether it's roller-skating, making a mean gumbo, competitive latte art, or something else entirely, what are some talents that you're proud of?

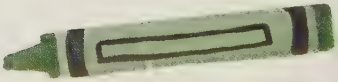
DATE :

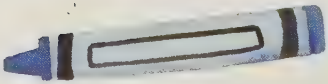
Today is a great day because:

FAVORITE MEMORIES

What are your favorite childhood memories? List some of them here:







MAKING A LIVING

[illegible]

are some things you value about your employment situation right now? How can you find gratitude in the current stage of your career?

ORANGE

How does the color orange make you feel? What are some of your favorite orange things?


count your
joys
instead of
your woes
Count your
friends
instead of your
foes. -IRISH
PROVERB

DATE _____

Joys I am grateful for today:

IN THE NAME OF LOVE

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
appreciate about that someone (or those someones):

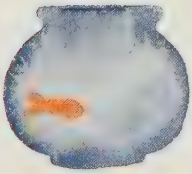
IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Think about parenting—how you were parented, and if you have children, how you parent your own kids. In your life, what have you learned about parenting? What aspects of parenting are you most grateful for?

HOME SWEET HOME

Wherever we live, city apartment, country cabin, suburban ranch, our homes are our safe havens, our sanctuaries. What do you love and appreciate about your home? What kind of home do you envision having in the future?


8



[illegible] person you've become? What is special about them?

DATE _____

MORNING MINDFULNESS

Begin each day with a grateful heart. The next time you wake up, stay in bed [illegible] the new day ahead of you.

Ten things I am grateful for this morning:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

brains give us the ability to form opinions and emotions, and how cool it is that our vocal cords let us talk to one another. How incredible is it that we have hands? And opposable thumbs? What do you love that your body can do? What are you grateful for?

DATE _____

Things I find beautiful today:

SENSE OF TASTE

Your mom's famous banana bread, super-spicy pad Thai, a refreshing glass of [illegible] to taste. Every once in a while, think about this sensation. List your favorite tastes here:

WATER IS LIFE

Not only do we need water for survival, but also we are inherently drawn to it—oceans, rivers, even swimming pools. Think about water in all its forms: in [illegible] do you appreciate about water?

DATE

NIGHTTIME MINDFULNESS

End the day with gratitude by reflecting on the days events and focusing on your well-spent moments.

Top ten things about today:

1

2

3

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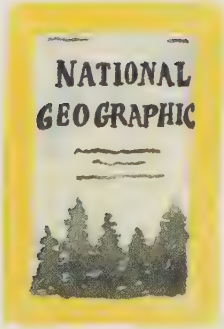
YELLOW

ow does the color yellow make you feel? What are some of your favorite



Are you currently experiencing a conflict or challenge in your life? Maybe you have a coworker you don't care for, or you're having financial difficulties. Challenge yourself to find the positive side of the experience. Write about it here:

LITTLE COMFORTS

Modern life is filled with little things that make our lives easier or more comfortable—spell-check, toilet paper, scissors, toenail clippers, silverware. Brainstorm a list of little conveniences that you are thankful for here:

AMAZING EARTH

Pretty complex and amazing things are happening all around us, and we hardly even notice! Tiny acorns turn into huge trees, bees pollinate our flowers and food, phytoplankton produces 50 percent of the earth's oxygen. What miracles in nature do you appreciate?

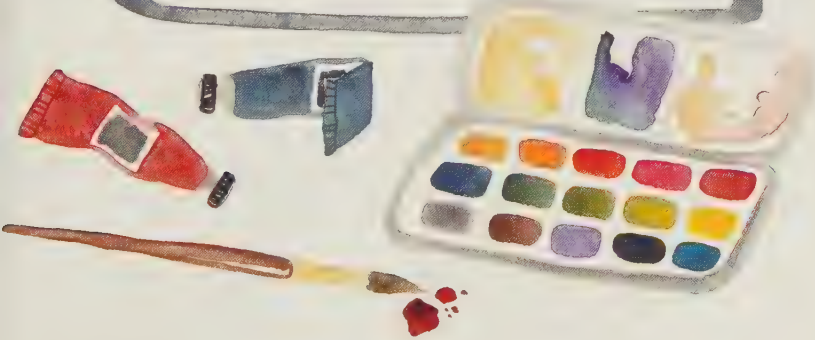
With longer days and warmer temperatures, we have more opportunities to play outside. The supermarket is overflowing with the season's fruits and vegetables, and our patio flowers are in full bloom. What do you appreciate about summer?

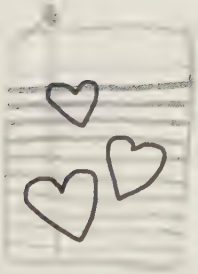
A SUMMER PROJECT: MAKE FRUIT POPSICLES

Art affe[illegible] museums, stuck to the fridge, spray-painted on train cars, plastered on billboard[illegible] and why? How [illegible] represents your gratitude for something.

THE ESSENCE OF ALL BEAUTIFUL ART, ALL GREAT ART, IS GRATITUDE.

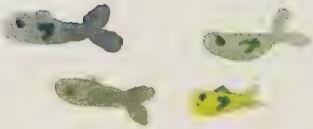
—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE





GREEN

[illegible]
green things?

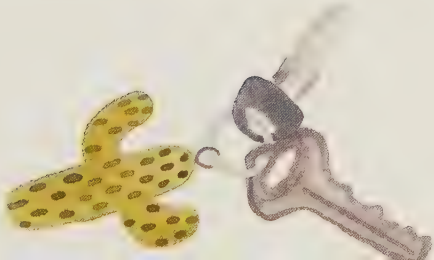


DATE _____

Joys I am grateful for today:

FAVORITE MEMORIES

What are your favorite teenage memories? Write about some of them here:



PROJECT: MAKE A GRATITUDE BULLETIN BOARD

Filling a bulletin board with visual reminders of your abundance—family, friends, a fantastic vacation, a cherished love note—is a quick and easy way to tap into some positive energy. What kinds of things will you include on your board? List them here:


I LOVE
YOU.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

organization? By sending a short note of appreciation to your local fire station? Write some ideas here:

[illegible]

you are grateful for?

situation that can be seen as positive? Even if you can't find something to be

DATE _____

OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY THINGS

Five out-of-the-ordinary things I am thankful for today:

1

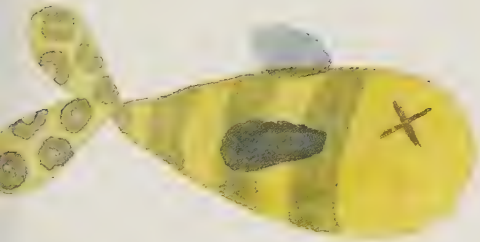
2

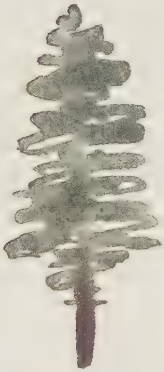
3

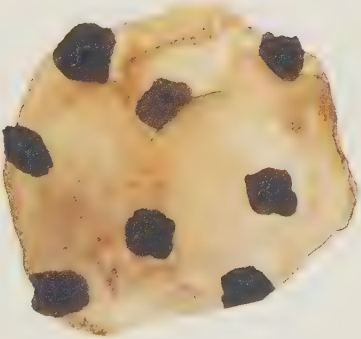
4

5

SENSE OF SMELL







[illegible]
appreciate about where you live right now?

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Life is full of opportunities to learn something new, and we pick up little bits of wisdom along the way. Think about what it means to learn, to be curious, to be amazed. What new abilities or perspectives have you gained in your life? Who has been your greatest teacher?


I AM
STILL
LEARNING.
-MICHELANGELO,
age 87

CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE: LOOK UP

Stand in a wide-open space—a park, a soccer field, your neighbor's driveway. Try it in the daytime and then again at night. What do you notice that you hadn't noticed before? What do you appreciate just by changing your vantage point?

DATE _____

Things I find beautiful today:

GRAY

How does the color gray make you feel? What are some of your favorite gray things?

Science isn't just about chemistry experiments and space travel. Science is about exploration, curiosity, and learning. Think about how scientific advancements have affected you in your life—in the medical care you've received, in the energy you use to heat your home, in the food you eat. What do you appreciate about science?

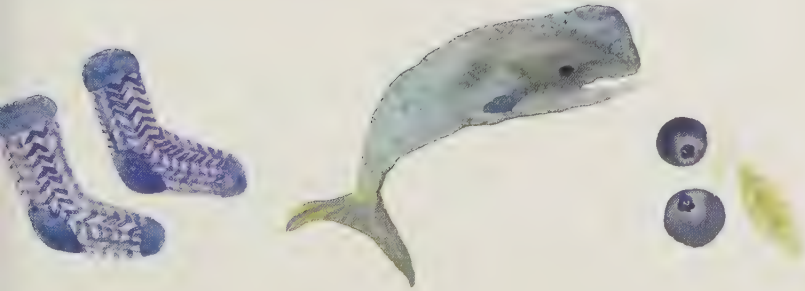
A LITTLE DISCOMFORT

[illegible]

some things you might not be too comfortable with but can find value in?

BLUE

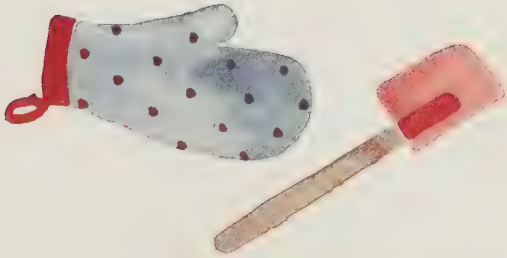
Favorite food? Favorite drink? Favorite place? Favorite color? Favorite blue things?



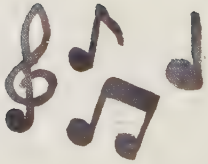
drives, calculators, GPS, all at our fingertips. In what ways does technology make your life easier? What gadgets are you most grateful for?

FAMILY TRADITIONS

How does your family celebrate holidays or milestones? Do you have a favorite birthday ritual or special recipe you cook on certain occasions? What family traditions are you grateful for?



Music can evoke powerful emotions. Close your eyes and listen to a favorite song—really listen. Why do you love it? How does it make you feel? Write down what you appreciate about your favorite music:



DATE _____

MORNING MINDFULNESS

[illegible] and think about the possibilities of the new day ahead of you.

Ten things I am grateful for this morning:

1

2

3

4

5

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7

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9

10

from your child? List five of your most treasured possessions. Why are you grateful to have them?

STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES

[illegible] the path [illegible] In [illegible] your current path? What do you appreciate about your journey so far?

DATE _____

Joys I am grateful for today:

PURPLE

How does the color purple make you feel? What are some of your favorite

After a long, hot summer, some parts of the world are definitely ready for a reprieve. Picturesque fall colors, cooler temperatures, pumpkin-spice everything . . . What do you appreciate about fall?

AN AUTUMN PROJECT: CREATE A LEAF MANDALA

WRITE A LETTER

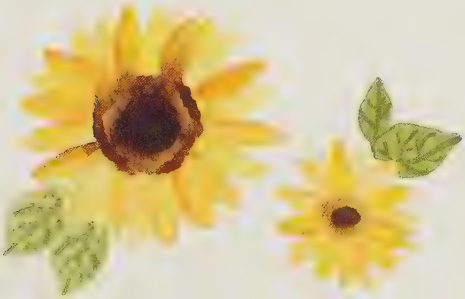
Write a letter to someone in your present—your spouse, your partner, a family member, a friend—who is always there for you. How has this person changed your life for the better? How does he or she make you feel? Why are you [illegible] this person knows?


YOU'RE
GREAT!

It can be difficult to reframe a situation in which we believe we have failed. But sometimes one door closes and another opens. What are some challenges you've overcome in your life? How did you pick yourself back up? What did you do to move on? Can you find any character-building lessons to be learned in this situation?

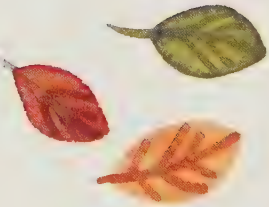
OUR GREATEST GLORY IS, NOT IN NEVER FALLING, BUT IN RISING EVERY TIME WE FALL.

-OLIVER GOLDSMITH



BEHIND THE SCENES

Our world is filled with systems that make our lives a little bit easier: Our mail [illegible] make your life easier here:



DATE _____

NIGHTTIME MINDFULNESS

End the day with gratitude by reflecting on the day's events and focusing on your well-spent moments.

Top ten things about today:

1

2

3

4

5

6

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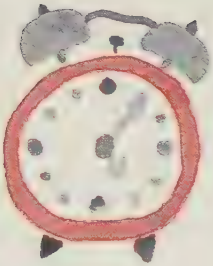
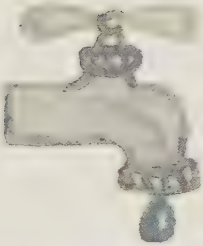
9

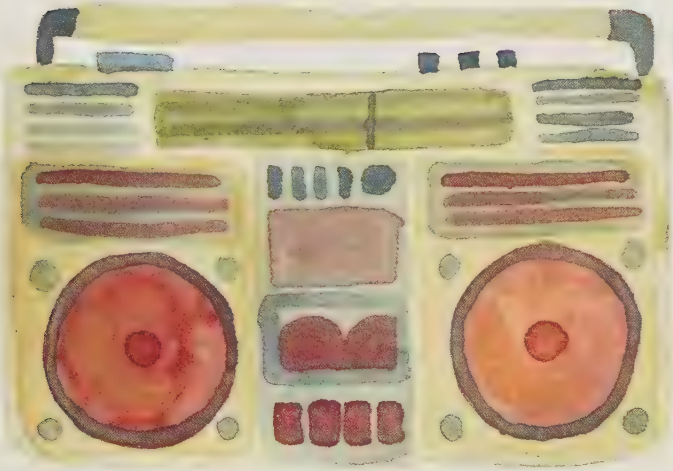
10

SENSE OF HEARING

Unbridled laughter, a cat's purr, a rushing river—there are so many wonderful sounds. Every once in a while, close your eyes and just listen. List your favorite sounds here:







[illegible]

[illegible]

new people, trying new food, or turning off your phone and enjoying the silence? Recall some of your favorite vacations and write down what you appreciate about those experiences:

DATE _____

ORDINARY THINGS

Five ordinary things I am thankful for today:

1

2

3

4

5

EXTRA-
ORDINARY
MAGIC IS
WOVEN
THROUGH
ORDINARY
LIFE

-AMY LEIGH MERCREE

PROJECT: HAVE A NO-ELECTRICITY DAY

There are [illegible] fade into the background, like electricity. Set aside a day, or even just an [illegible] light, air conditioning, the radio, or TV? After noticing how different life is without these comforts, what do you appreciate about them?

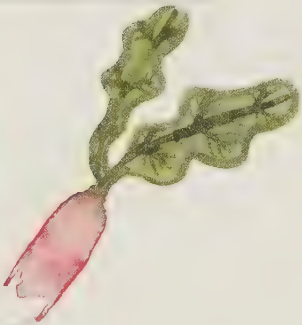
GRATITUDE BUCKET LIST

When we consider that we have a finite amount of time on this planet, we realize that every moment is a gift. Are you grateful for your health, your body, your two strong legs? Train for a 5K race. Do you love Latin music? Take up salsa dancing. Do you love Italian food? Plan a trip to Italy or take a deep dive into learning to cook your favorite dishes. Make a list and plot a course for gratitude in the future:

PINK

How does the color pink make you feel? What are some of your favorite pink things?

Pink Pearl



NIGHTTIME RITUAL

Do you have a nightly routine? Do you like to drink a cup of herbal tea or read a book before bed? Why not end the day by reflecting on the day's events? Write down some ideas here for a new bedtime ritual rooted in gratitude and mindfulness:

You can't choose your family but you can choose your friends. Make a list here of the friend[illegible]
How do they enrich your life?

Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.

-MARCEL PROUST

LESSONS LEARNED

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

What lessons have you learned?

DATE _____

MORNING MINDFULNESS

[illegible] your eyes, and think about the possibilities of the new day ahead of you.

Ten things I am grateful for this morning:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

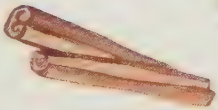
10 _____

DATE _____

Things I find beautiful today:

BROWN

[illegible] your favorite [illegible]



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

For most of us, someone grows our food, picks it for us, and sells it to us.

When you think about food, what are you thankful for?

DATE _____

TO-DO

[illegible] seemingly [illegible] errands [illegible] every moment. What are ten things you are thankful for right now?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Complaining about traffic is a common pastime. A better use of our time could be remembering how nice it is to have a car that runs or a top-notch public transportation system that makes life easier. What modes of transportation do you use, and why are you thankful for them?

CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE: LOOK DOWN

Think about your heritage, your roots. Where does your family come from? Consider what it took your ancestors to get to this point. Did they immigrate from another country? What part of your family heritage are you most proud of?


All things must come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted.
-SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

How does the color white make you feel? What are some of your favorite white things?

DATE _____

ORDINARY THINGS

Five ordinary things I am thankful for today:

1

2

3

4

5

mild where you live? What do you appreciate about winter?

A WINTER PROJECT: MAKE BIRDSEED ORNAMENTS

PEARLS OF WISDOM

As we get older, we collect experiences that shape us. We learn things, we change, we adapt, we grow. At this point in your life, how do you feel about aging? What wisdom are you grateful to have accumulated so far?

[illegible] Being is like building [illegible] gratitude. Spend a few minutes, or even an afternoon, alone and in silence. [illegible] gratitude. How do you feel?

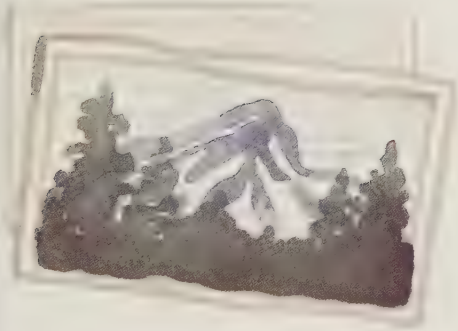
WRITE A LETTER

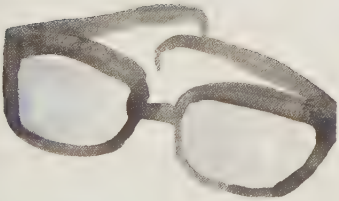
Write a letter to someone you hope to have in your future—a child, a partner, a friend, or [illegible] you would want to make sure this person knows?

SENSE OF SIGHT

[illegible]

many wonderful sights. Every once in a while, pause and really look around. List your favorite things to lay eyes on here:





PROJECT: MAKE A GRATITUDE JAR

[illegible] and celebrate your abundance.

DATE

NIGHTTIME MINDFULNESS

End the day with gratitude by reflecting on the day's events and focusing on your well-spent moments.

Top ten things about today:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

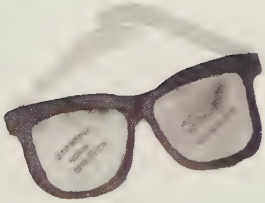
8

9

10

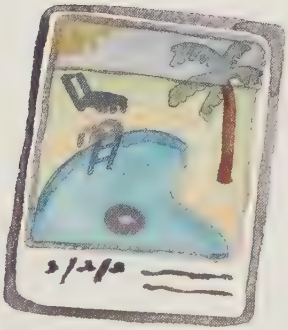
BLACK

How does the color [illegible] you feel? What are some of your favorite black things?



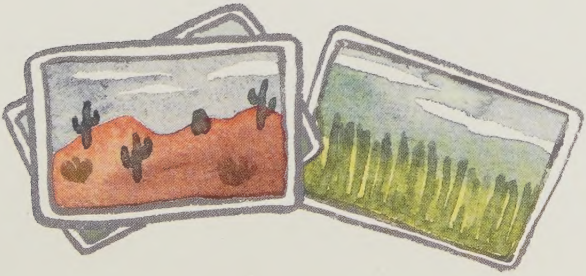
FAMILY TIES

[illegible]
shape who you are today?



FAVORITE MEMORIES

What are your favorite memories as an adult? List some of them here:



DATE _____

Today is a great day because:

APPRECIATE THE LITTLE THINGS—the changing seasons, a favorite book, or a morning to yourself—and you'll start to see the positive in everything. This beautifully illustrated journal, filled with activities and prompts to get you noticing the good that's around you, is the easiest way to cultivate a happier and more grateful life.

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